



## Y2K project gave teamwork lessons

by Don Nord

**L**ike the rest of the world, Western's Y2K success was demonstrated when we rolled into 2000 without things going haywire. An equally important demonstration, though, was seeing the way people across Western worked with each other and with our outside partners. This was real teamwork in action.

Looking back on these past three years, I have some thoughts on teamwork in general, and on what we should take from this experience and apply to future projects. I don't pass myself off as an expert in these matters, except that they say we learn from our mistakes. And during the Y2K project I was blessed with a vast assortment of educational opportunities.

One of the most important elements of a successful project is vision. Y2K came with a ready-made vision, so I can't take any credit for that. Still, everyone understood the ultimate objective, and that never varied. There were times when unforeseen events or lapses in direction might have caused the project to flounder if it wasn't for the shared vision.

This is a critical part of all major efforts, even though more difficult to establish. I don't mean just a vision "statement," but rather that everyone is committed to the same destination.

I can't overstate the importance of communication. It needs to flow up, down and sideways. Common sense says you need to get the right information to the right people at the right time, but that's far easier said than done.

Communication takes a variety of forms, because what works for some things won't work for others. And quality is more important than quantity, although I still get razzed for drowning my Y2K team in e-mails. It helps if the information communicated is accurate, but you can't get too hung up. If I'd waited to communicate something until I knew what I was talking about, we'd still be waiting on some of it.

Y2K gave me the opportunity to work with other utilities, agencies, customers and industry organizations. It became clear to me that we're not just part of Western, we're part of the electric power industry working together. We need to keep that perspective in all of our efforts.

Also, top-level support, both from Western management and from outside forces, was never lacking. That as much as anything is critical to a project.

Last, but certainly not least, good people make a project or a team successful. We had great people all over Western contributing to the Y2K effort. I want to thank once again my Y2K

team and the rollover and contingency plan coordinators, as well as the many employees and managers who did the work and were part of this Westernwide "team."

**(Note: Nord was Western's Y2K project manager.)**

## Western recognized for Y2K efforts

In a recent letter, the Arizona Division of Emergency Management applauded Western's effort to prepare for the Y2K rollover and our close coordination with State Emergency Operations Center. The letter singled out DSW employees **Roy Tinsley**, a so-in-so at such and such and **Dan DeGracie**, a so-in-so at such and such, for playing vital roles.

The letter noted, "Over the past several months, Roy Tinsley and Dan DeGracie dedicated considerable time and talent to prepare the SEOC for Y2K. Your agency's contributions were vital to the mission's effectiveness . . . They are an asset to your organization and to the state of Arizona."